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CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS

BY

GEORGE BELCHER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
FRANK SWINNERTON

SECOND EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

A FRIEND of mine, an artist, once realized that there was a singular lack of correspondence between his drawings and the objects which they were supposed to represent. This, judging by the drawings one sees, was either an exceptional piece of insight, indicating genius in the artist, or it was a knowledge which many artists heroically ignore when it comes to themselves. My friend, at any rate, marvelled at the discrepancy ; and he blamed his fingers. They, he decided, were inexpert. They were the traitors. They could not reproduce exactly what he with delicate perceptiveness saw before him. For a time the artist tried very hard to improve his draughtsmanship. And then, suddenly, his mind leapt to a truth. He discovered that his eye, and not his hand, was at fault. In making this discovery he crossed the chasm which divides the eternal amateur from the professional—or, at least, the non-artist from the artist. To parallel this from a craft with which I am more familiar, perhaps I may say that many of those who justifiably and with much assurance criticize over the tea-cups the way in which novels are written do in the same degree fail when they essay the task of writing novels. They do not know enough. They are explanatory when they should be vivid ; they narrate when they should picture. Conscious of the defects of the books they read, conscious at last of the botch they have themselves committed, they suppose the deficiencies of which they become aware to be due to lack of executive skill. It is not so. The fact is, we can most of us roughly and crudely appraise the truth or untruth of a picture—whether it is in line or in word ; but when it comes to the point of expression we are betrayed, not by our technical unskilfulness, but by our simple ignorance of what is passing all around us. Our ignorance is stupendous. We travel every day, perhaps, in omnibuses and trains and tram-cars ; but our ear is not quick enough to catch varying tones and accents, and our eye is not quick enough to perceive—let alone to record—all the strange things which lie everywhere before it. When we hear a first-class mimic, who emphasises significant features of dialect by selecting and, as it were, abstracting them from the general medley of speech ; or when we see one of Mr. George Belcher's drawings, which does exactly the same thing in line, we are instantly conscious in a high degree of the pleasures of recognition. We exclaim with delight. We appreciate the truth of Mr. Belcher's drawings and their humour. We begin to look out for more of his work, and to delight in its aptness, its apparent carelessness of execution, the familiarity of the faces he pictures. And by concentrating upon Mr. Belcher's fine skill we do less than justice to the much finer perception which lies behind all the seeming ease of his work, and which distinguishes him from so many of his fellow-craftsmen.

I can remember walking along the sands of an East Coast seaside resort with a man who is, I believe, by common consent the most observant writer now alive. I saw a great many things, and remarked upon them. He also saw a great many things, and remarked upon them. We had an exceedingly pleasant stroll, and as we returned homewards my friend suggested that we might be said to have "seen" Frinton-on-Sea. But the truth was that he had seen the place in relation to some thousands of highly expert understandings which were entirely unknown to me. I had seen with my eyes and my experience; but while my eyes were perhaps not inferior to my friend's eyes, my experience, the power which transmutes all observation, was by comparison contemptible. It is this experience, this power to associate, to fuse, to detach every piece of observation, which is the rare faculty. It comes from a natural sensitiveness which has been cultivated and matured over a long period of incessant attention to the spectacle of life. Observation is only significant by virtue of its associations. We can recognize and appreciate the results of observation in others, but few can claim to have the sort of creative observation which is the source of this delight. We can thus enumerate details; but we cannot eliminate them, as Mr. Belcher does. We should not dare to do so, for elimination is only permitted to those who are so sure of their facts that they can dispense with proofs and authorities and confirmations.

Take any one of the best of the drawings in this book. Take, for example, that scene in an eating-house where it is suggested that tripe is less stringy if not eaten through a veil; or that other scene where protest is being made as to a knife which is unsuitable for the eating of peas. Forget the peas and the tripe. What remains in each case? Two entirely human people are engaged in the familiar act of eating. We can imagine the food and the facial performance of the eaters. The picture needs no "legend." It speaks for itself. It also appeals to the imagination of the beholder. Many artists, perhaps, could have illustrated either joke in a way to make us laugh; but Mr. Belcher does something more. He presents us in each case with a picture of real life, which is not merely a transcript. It is a clean and vigorous rendering of a class. A writer of the same calibre as Mr. Belcher might give us a similarly selective and concise record of the conversation of this pair throughout the meal; but Mr. Belcher makes further information about them superfluous, for he enables us to imagine the scene for ourselves.

It is not, in fact, in the actual jokes that the excellence of the present collection lies. Many of them could have been used by artists inferior to Mr. Belcher. What Mr. Belcher needs, however, is an occasion for the showing of two human beings in conversation. Give him that, and the story arises naturally. Granted an interchange of appropriate remarks, these two living creatures are so accurately seen that they can be rendered with an air (it is only an air) of inattentiveness, and with that added lustre of peculiarity which comes from the artist's wit and his sense of the grotesque in nature. It is a twist, an emphasis, that makes the people in the drawings start out as "characters." They are not drawn flat or finite; they hardly ever fail to suggest all sorts of thoughts and suppositions and humorous

notions which certainly are not supplied by the printed words beneath the drawings. It is as if, in opening this book, we found the world transfigured—re-peopled with comic characters that we have unconsciously known all our lives, as we know the comic characters in literature. These people have been in being all the time. We have seen them in the past—yesterday—to-day. And Mr. Belcher has made them spring into memory and knowledge by creating them for us. To those who will spend time and a little of that agreeable rambling speculation which is permitted to the fancy, the book will provide material for a host of life stories. It could not do so if the drawings, beneath their wit, had not a permanent basis of steady observation. Each character here is not only an individual but an epitome.

Drawings, I think, are often strong—stronger than paintings—in this power to awaken and to encourage speculation. Their suggestive power is incalculable. For years I have cherished a collection of small books called “ Drawings by Great Masters,” and these little books never fail to produce in me an absorbed imagining—an awareness of life not so much in a fragmentary state as seized by an eye which by intuitive vision and experience has made a scene quick with significance. The thing has been detached from the general chiaroscuro, and it is rich in suggestion—in the apparently careless freedom of a sudden gesture. Well, is not Mr. Belcher in just this way presenting us here with something akin to a book of “ Drawings by a Great Master ” ? Take his picture of the poor woman who is upon the wrong omnibus and who wants to go to Peckham ; take the lady who is talking to her page in “ A Dog’s Life ” ; or take that other lady who, upon a cold morning, is glad that she decided to wear her furs. Each of these is a highly finished portrait. It can be admired as a portrait. But it is also, in its way, the beginning of a novel to be written by the beholder. As one looks at the picture one’s imagination begins to weave the social background, to create the proposed destination of the woman on the omnibus, the ménage of the lady with the fur, the character of the lady with the dog. The fact that one has been first amused by recognition becomes negligible. Then only is it made quite clear why Mr. Belcher’s book has been named “ Characters,” and not “ Individuals ” or “ People.” The individual, it is true, is rendered ; but not alone the individual. There is more to Mr. Belcher’s gift than that. He takes common life and he makes it humane. It is the work of a distinguished talent, and it is now, as always, upon a highly distinguished work that this talent is engaged. It is nothing less than the humane re-discovery of a world that our unobservant eyes would otherwise contrive to ignore. It is the creation of a new world of familiar characters.

FRANK SWINNERTON

I WISH to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Proprietors of "Punch" for kindly allowing me to reproduce some of the drawings in this book which originally appeared in that paper.

I also wish to thank the Proprietor of "The Tatler" for the help they have extended to me in bringing together the drawings which originally appeared in the "Tatler's" pages.

GEORGE BELCHER

6, WILLIAM STREET, KNIGHTSBRIDGE

I *June*, 1922



'ERE'S 'EALTH!

"THERE WOULDN'T BE 'ALF THE ILLNESS ABOUT, MRS. GREEN, IF PEOPLE WAS MORE REG'LAR IN THEIR 'ABITS."



Old Lady : " DOES YOUR HORSE EVER SHY AT MOTORS ?
Cabby : " LOR' BLESS YER, NO, LADY ; 'E DIDN'T EVEN SHY WHEN RAILWAYS FUST CAME IN."

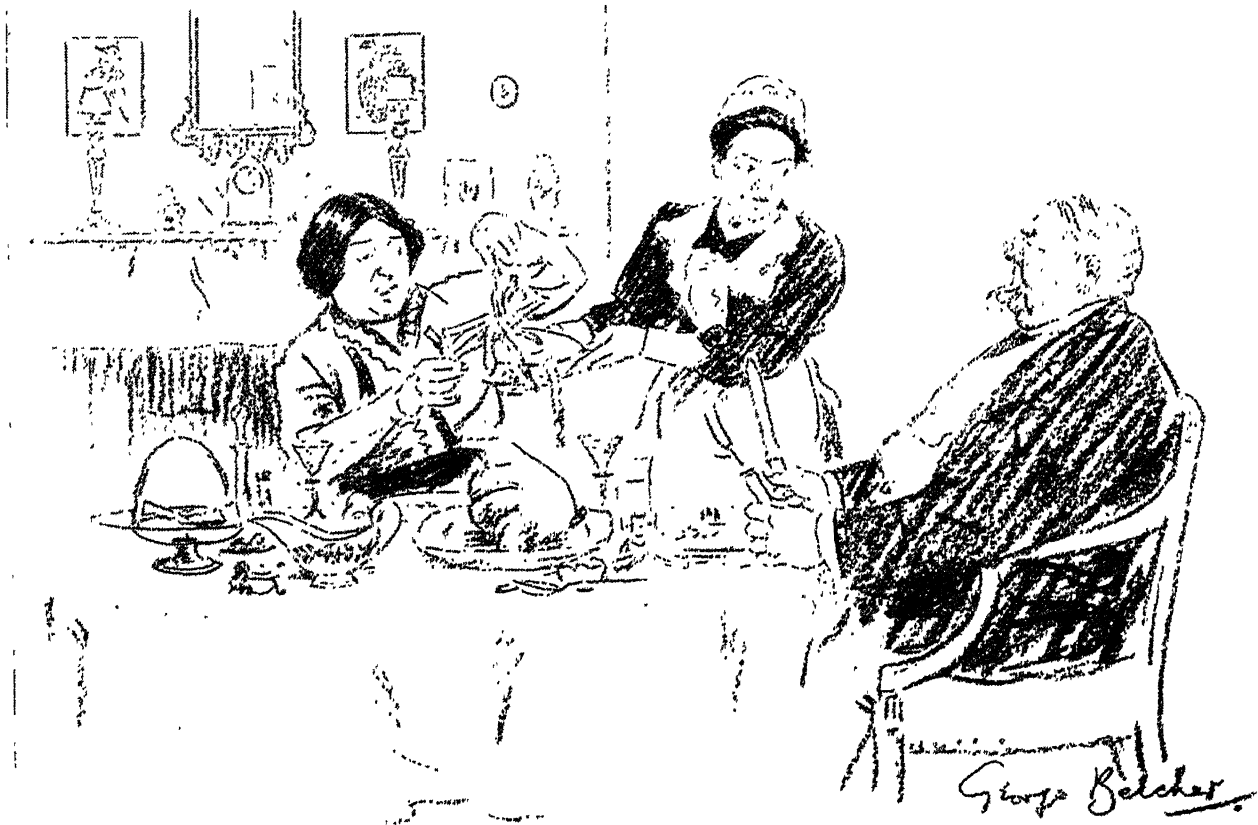


WHAT LANCASHIRE THINKS

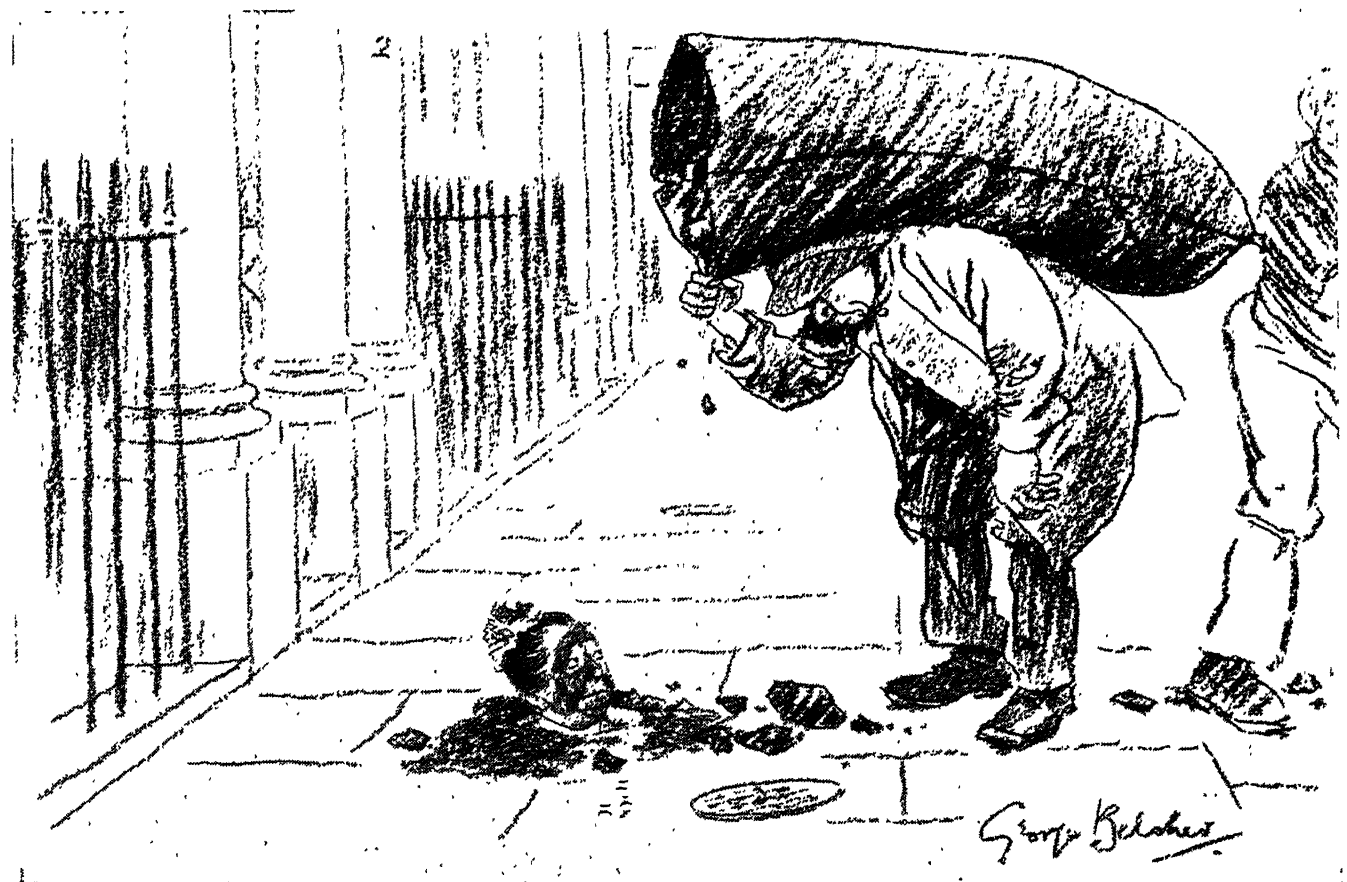
Old Lancashire Lady (to young friend who has expressed her intentions of going by an excursion to the Metropolis) : " DOAN'T
 THEE GOA TO LONDON ; THEE STOP IN OWD ENGLAND."



"'OW DO YOU EXPECT A GENT TO EAT 'IS PEAS WITH A KNIFE LIKE THAT?'"



Mr. Brown : " YES, THIS CIVIL WAR BUSINESS IN IRELAND IS TERRIBLE—TERRIBLE—BUT, GOOD HEAVENS, MARIA, WHY IS'NT THERE ANY ONION SAUCE ? "



THE SCRUTINEER

Eliza Jones : " 'ERE, THAT LAST ONE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A FULL SACK TO ME. "



PUZZLED

"DID YOU GO TO THE THEATRE WHEN YOU WAS UP TO LONDON, WILLIAM?"

"YES, JOHN, US WENT TO ONE OF THEY CINEMER THEATRES, BUT I COULDN'T MAKE HEAD NOR TAIL O'T, FOR I COULDN'T 'EAR A WORD."



*Lady (diligent reader of spy articles and exposures of Anglo-German businesses) to Alien Window-cleaner : " LOOK HERE : YOU
NEEDN'T COME ANY MORE."*

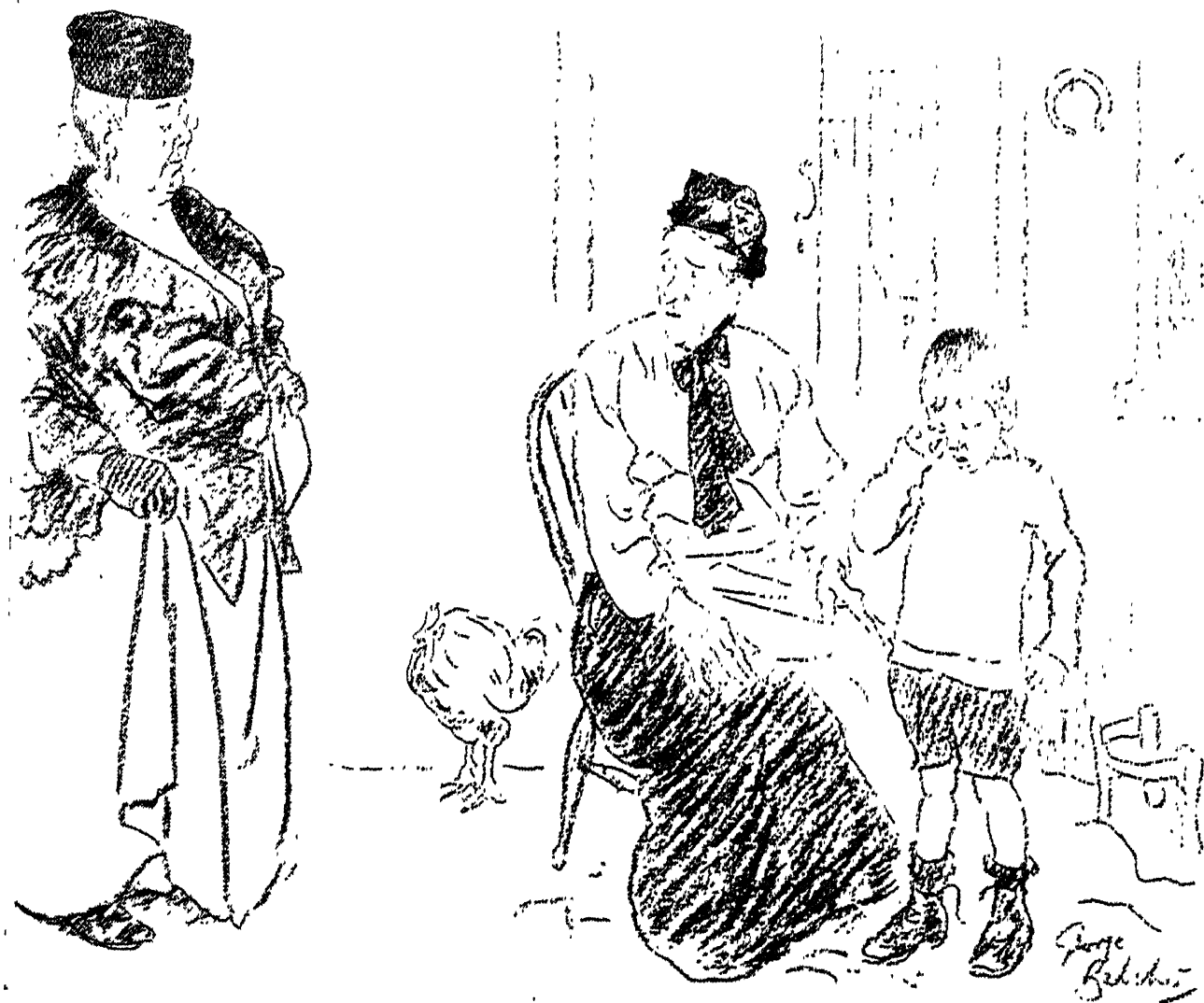
Window-cleaner : " ENTIRELY BRIDISCH COMBANY, LADY."

Lady : " YES, I DARESAY. BUT FOR ALL I KNOW YOU MIGHT BE PART OF THE FLOWER OF THE GERMAN ARMY."



A QUEUE NOTE

She: "WHEN I 'EARD 'ER ARST FOR TWO POUNDS, I STRUCK 'ER."



District Visitor : " AND HOW'S YOUR LITTLE GRANDSON, MRS. ROONEY ? "

Mrs. Rooney (whose little Grandson is recovering from scarlet fever) : " HE'S FEELING GRANDLY, MA'AM. BUT HE'S THAT DOWN IN HIMSELF, THAT I'M TAKING HIM TO THE PICTURES THIS EVENING TO CHEER HIM UP."



BITING

First Lady: "AIN'T IT 'ORRID WHEN YER FINDS A MAGGOT IN A NAPPLE?"

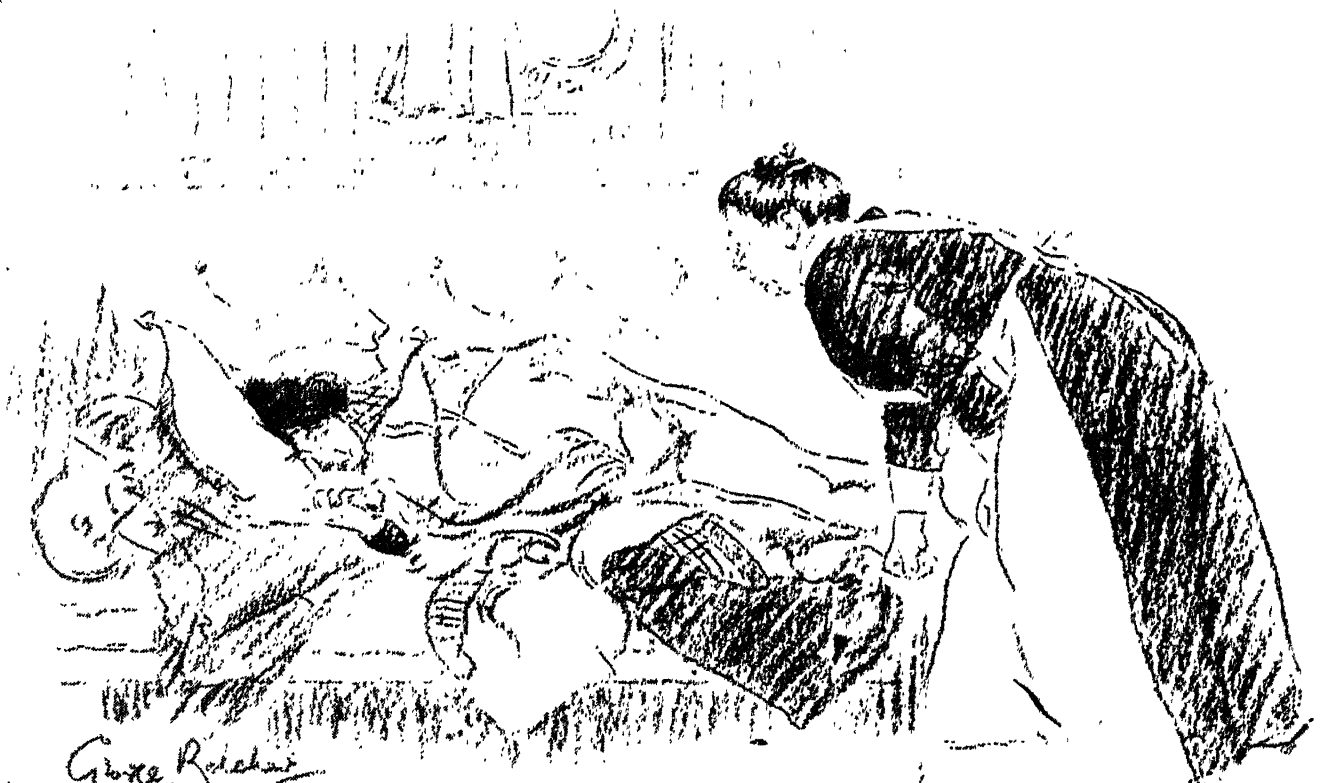
Second Lady: "YUS, BUT I RECKONS IT'S WUS WHEN YER FINDS ARF A MAGGIT IN A NAPPLE!"



George Balchin

First Irate Gentleman : " WHEN I 'ITS A MAN, 'E REMEMBERS IT."

Second Irate Gentleman : " WELL, WHEN I 'TIS ONE, 'E DON'T."



George Balchin

Stewardess : " WE ARE JUST NEARING THE HARBOUR, MADAM. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HOT WATER ? "

Passenger (faintly) : " IT DOESN'T MATTER, THANK YOU ; I'M ONLY GOING TO RELATIONS."



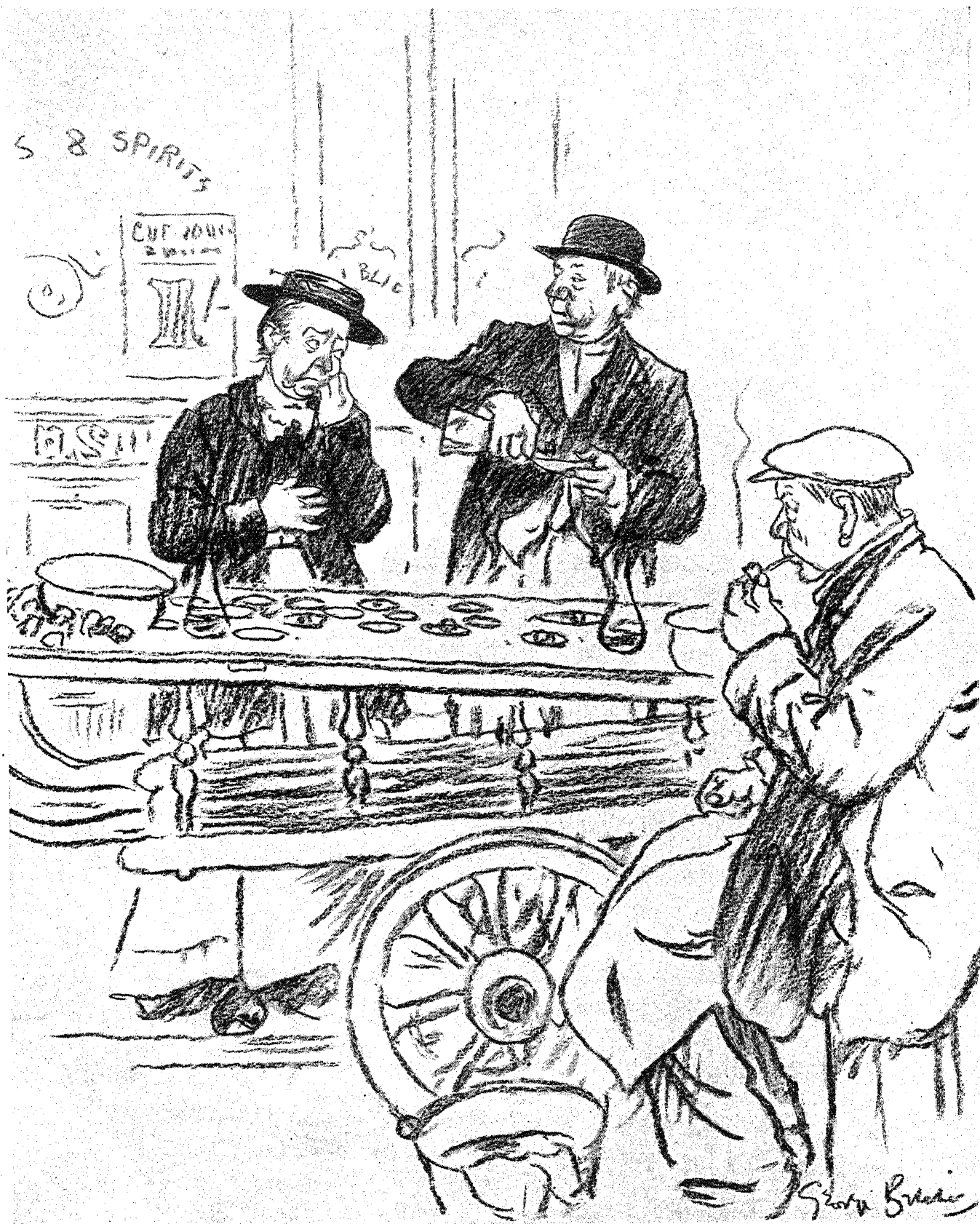
"NOBLESSE OBLIGE!"

Actor on Tour (to prospective landlady) : "DO YOU DO THE COOKING YOURSELF?"

Landlady : "NO, MY DAUGHTER DOES IT; BUT OF COURSE, A LADY CAN DO ANYTHING."



She (referring to host) : " YOU KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING RATHER NICE ABOUT MR. TOMKINS-SMITH."
He : " YES --I THINK IT MUST BE HIS WIFE."



A STUDY

He (to lady who has partaken rather too freely of whelks) : " BILYUS ? "
She : " Yus, BILL."



" I SHOULDN'T MIND, MESELF, IF THEY CLOSED THE PUBS A COUPLE O' HOURS' LONGER. WOT I SIZ IS, IF A MAN AIN'T FULL BY 'ALF-PAST TEN, 'E AIN'T TRYING."

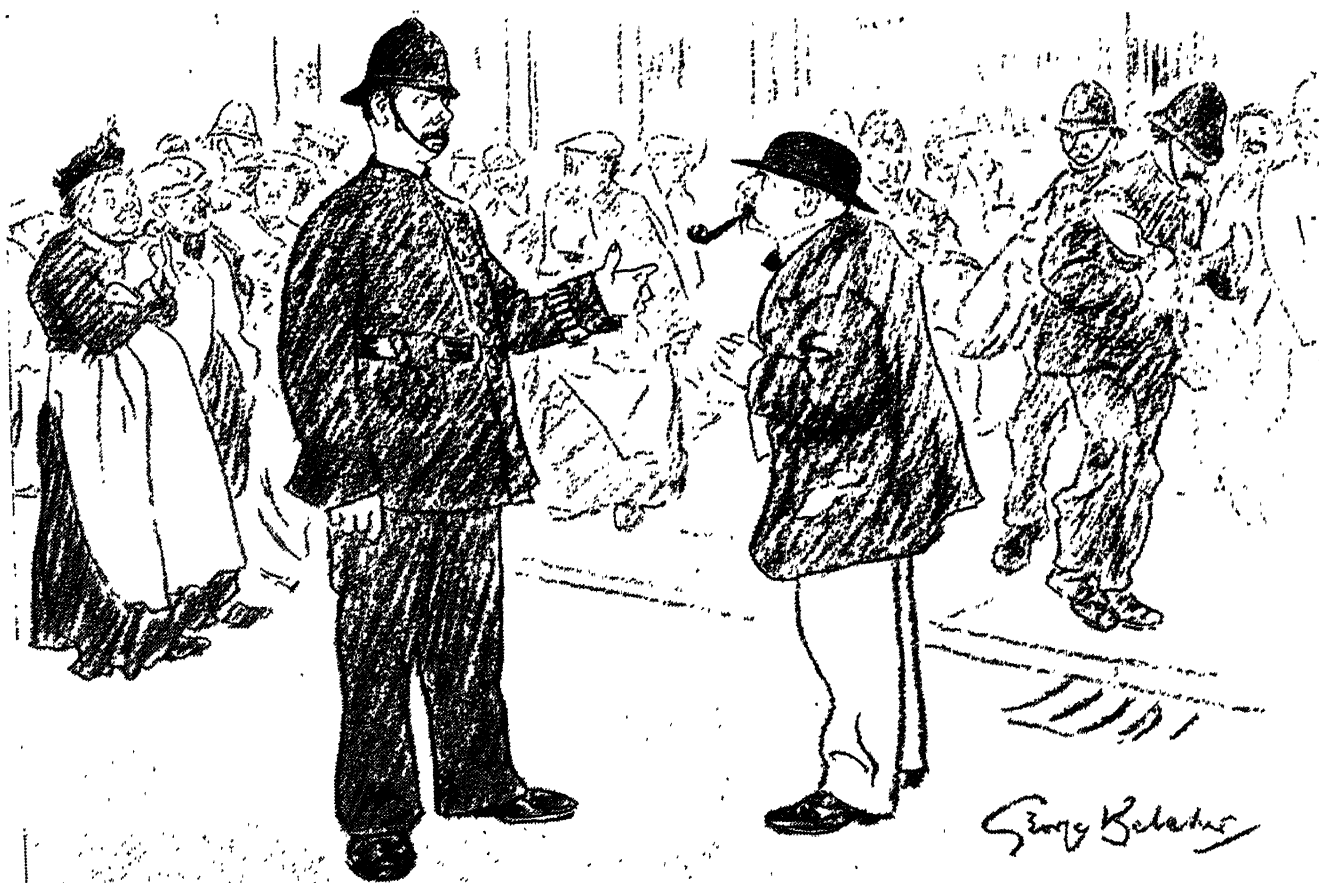


JUSTIFIED

Jones : " WHAT DO YOU KEEP JUMPING UP AND DOWN FOR ? NOBODY WILL TAKE YOUR COAT."
Scotch Friend (on a visit to London) : " WELL, THEY'VE TAKEN YOURS."



"ANOTHER BROKEN PLATE, MRS. BRIGGS?"
 "YES, SIR. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT SO MUCH WASHING MAKES THE CHINA BRITTLE-LIKE."

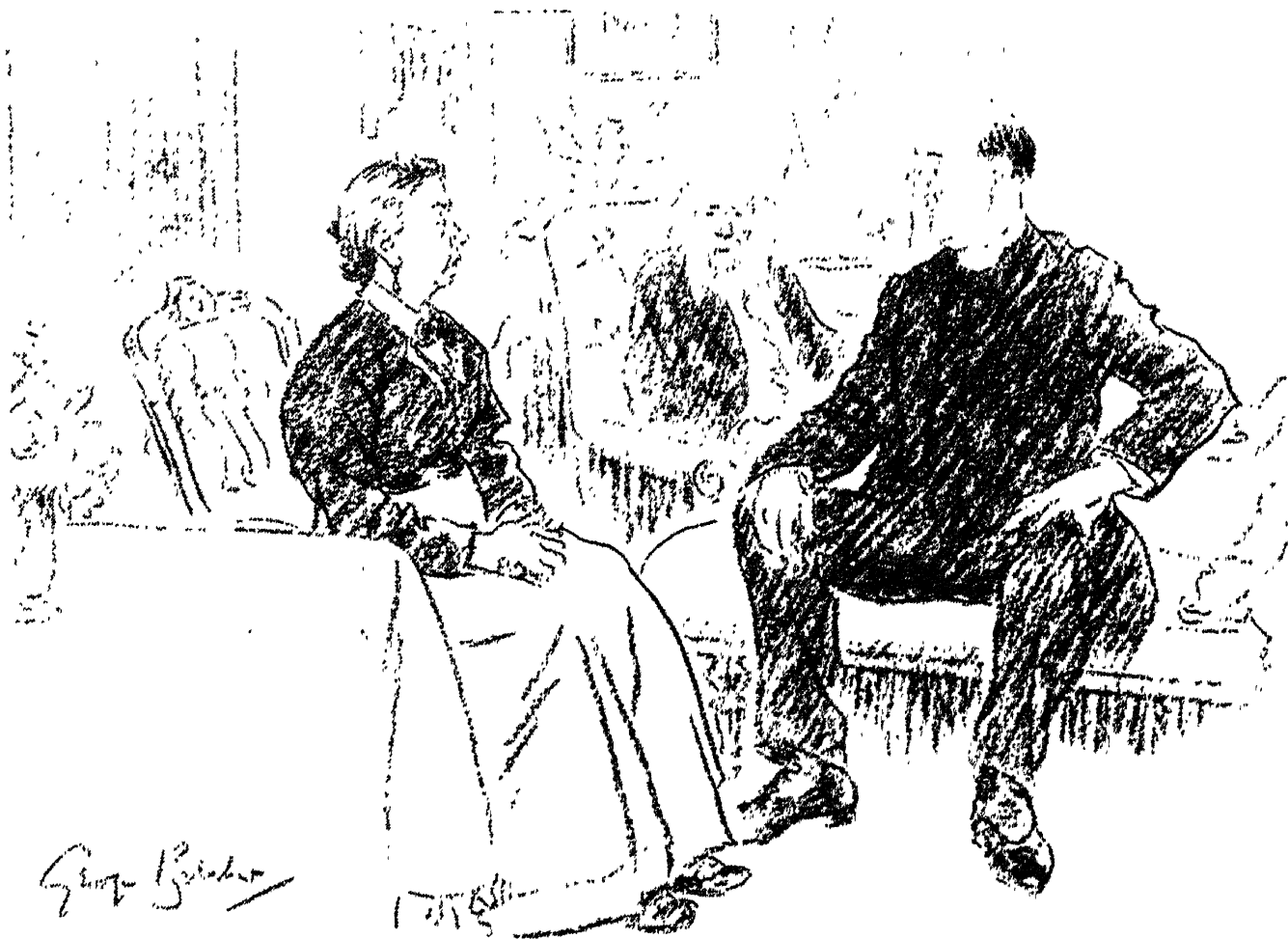


P.C. O'Leary : "MOVE ON THERE, AND DON'T BE OBSTRUCTING THE THOROUGHFARE!"
 Interested Spectator : "WOT 'ARM AM I DOIN' OF?"
 P.C. O'Leary : "SURE, IF EVERY WAN WAS TO STAND IN THE WAN PLACE, HOW WOULD THE REST GO BY?"



Lady (who has been photographed for passport): " THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF ME IS REALLY DREADFUL. WHY, I LOOK LIKE A GORILLA ! "

Photographer : " I'M VERY SORRY, LADY ; BUT, YOU SEE, THE GOVERNMENT WON'T ALLOW US TO TOUCH UP ANY PASSPORT PHOTOS. "



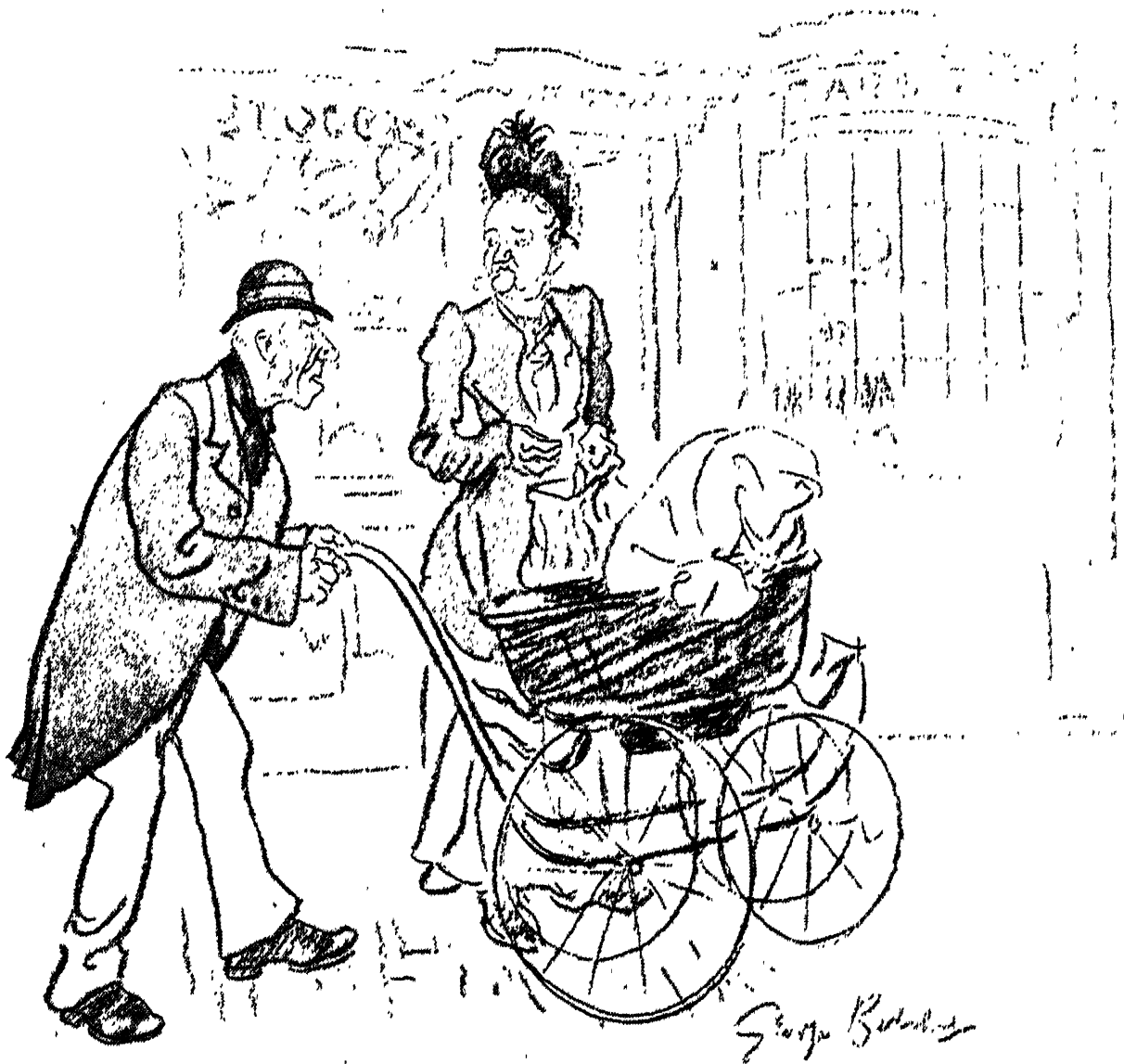
The Vicar: "THESE SALONIKANS, MRS. STUBBS, ARE OF COURSE THE THESSALONIANS TO WHOM ST. PAUL WROTE HIS CELEBRATED LETTERS."

Mrs. Stubbs: "WELL, I 'OPE 'E'D BETTER LUCK WITH 'IS THAN I 'AVE. I SENT MY BOY OUT THERE THREE LETTERS AND TWO PARCELS, AND I AIN'T GOT NO ANSWER TO 'EM YET."



IRON(Y)

"THE DOCTOR, 'E SAYS I'M ALL NERVES. 'YOU WANTS IRON,' 'E SAYS; 'YOU MUSN'T DRINK BEER, YOU MUST DRINK BURGUNDY.'"



She: "I TOLD 'EE TO GREASE THE WHEELS AFORE WE COME OUT."
He: "IT BE AS MUCH AS I CAN DO TO KEEP UP WITH IT AS 'TIS."



ENCOURAGING

Gentleman (from the corner of the street, who has been posing for a sketch): "WELL, I WISH YER GOOD MORNING, SIR, AND ONE OF THESE FINE DAYS WHEN I GET A BIT OF MONEY, I'LL GET YER TO TAKE ME PROPERLY."



First Lady : " THAT'S ONE OF THEM AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS."

Second Lady : " HOW DO YOU KNOW ? "

First Lady . " WHY, CAN'T YOU SEE THE KANGAROO FEATHERS IN HIS HAT ? "



Clergyman : " WILT THOU HAVE THIS WOMAN TO THY WEDDED WIFE ? "

Absent-minded Bridegroom (sponsor at many Christenings) : " I RENOUNCE THEM ALL. "



"FOR 'EAVEN'S SAKE, 'ERB, PULL UP YER SOCKS AND LOOK CHEERFUL. YOU'LL BE IN THE TRENCHES IN ANOTHER TEN YEARS."



THE LINE OF LEAST ASSISTANCE

Surprised Friend : " YOU GOING TO CHURCH, MRS. TIMMINS ?

Mrs. Timmins : " YES, I BE, MRS. GREEN. THEY DON'T GIVE NO SNUFF AND TEA AWAY AT THE ' SPOTTED DOG CHRISTMASTIME."



She : " 'E'S GOT TO GO UNDER AN OPERATION, SIR."

He : " REALLY ! WHAT FOR ? "

She : " 'ARICOT BRAINS IN 'IS LEG, SIR."

He : " BUT, MY GOOD WOMAN, OUR BRAINS ARE NOT IN OUR LEGS."

She : " 'IS ARE, SIR."



OPTIMISTIC

Cheerful Undertaker: "BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR THE FUNERAL, SIR; JUST ENOUGH BREEZE TO STIR THE PLUMES.
NOW JUMP IN, SIR, PLEASE."



Striker : " THA KNOWS, BILL, IF WE DUNNA MIND, T' MASTERS WILL BE T' BOSSES ! "

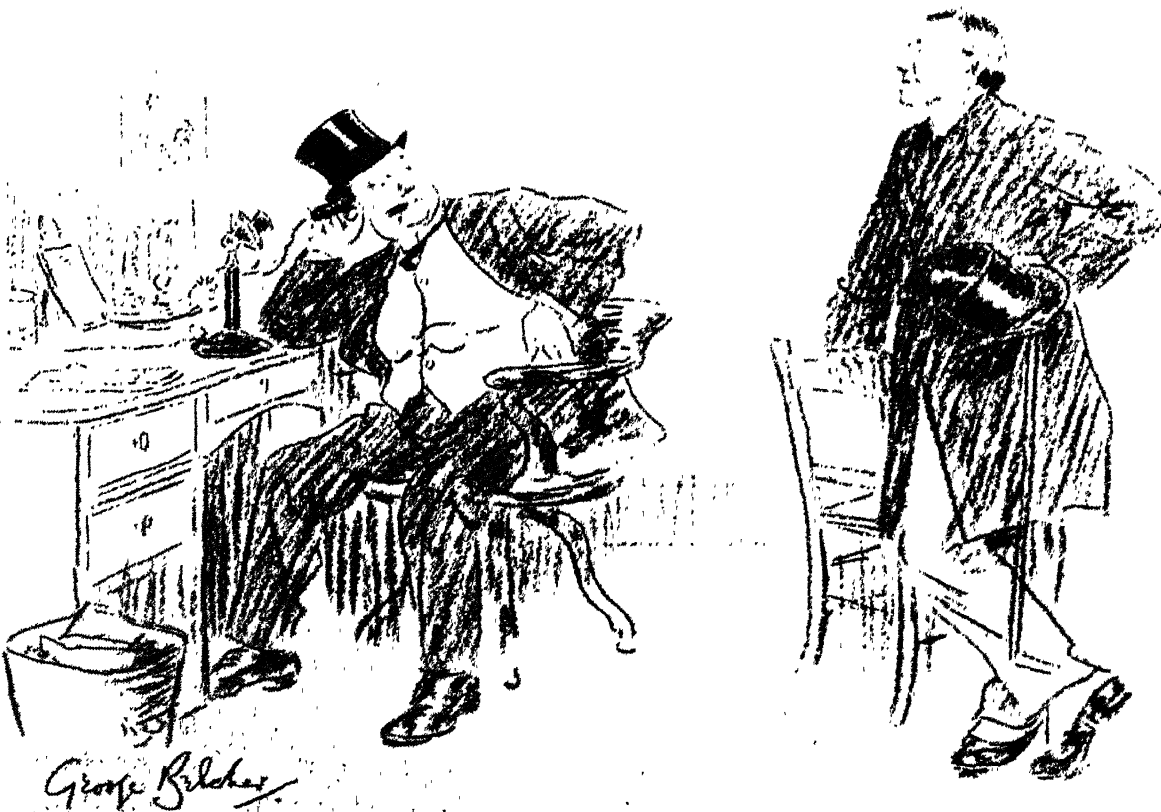


PROGRESS

(Mr. and Mrs. Wilks, up from the Country). She: "FANCY A SWIMMING BATH IN THE STREET. WE'LL WAIT TO SEE IF ANYBODY HAS ONE."



Porter : " LUGGAGE, SIR ? "
 Absent-minded old Gentleman : " NO, THANK YOU. I HAVE SOME. "

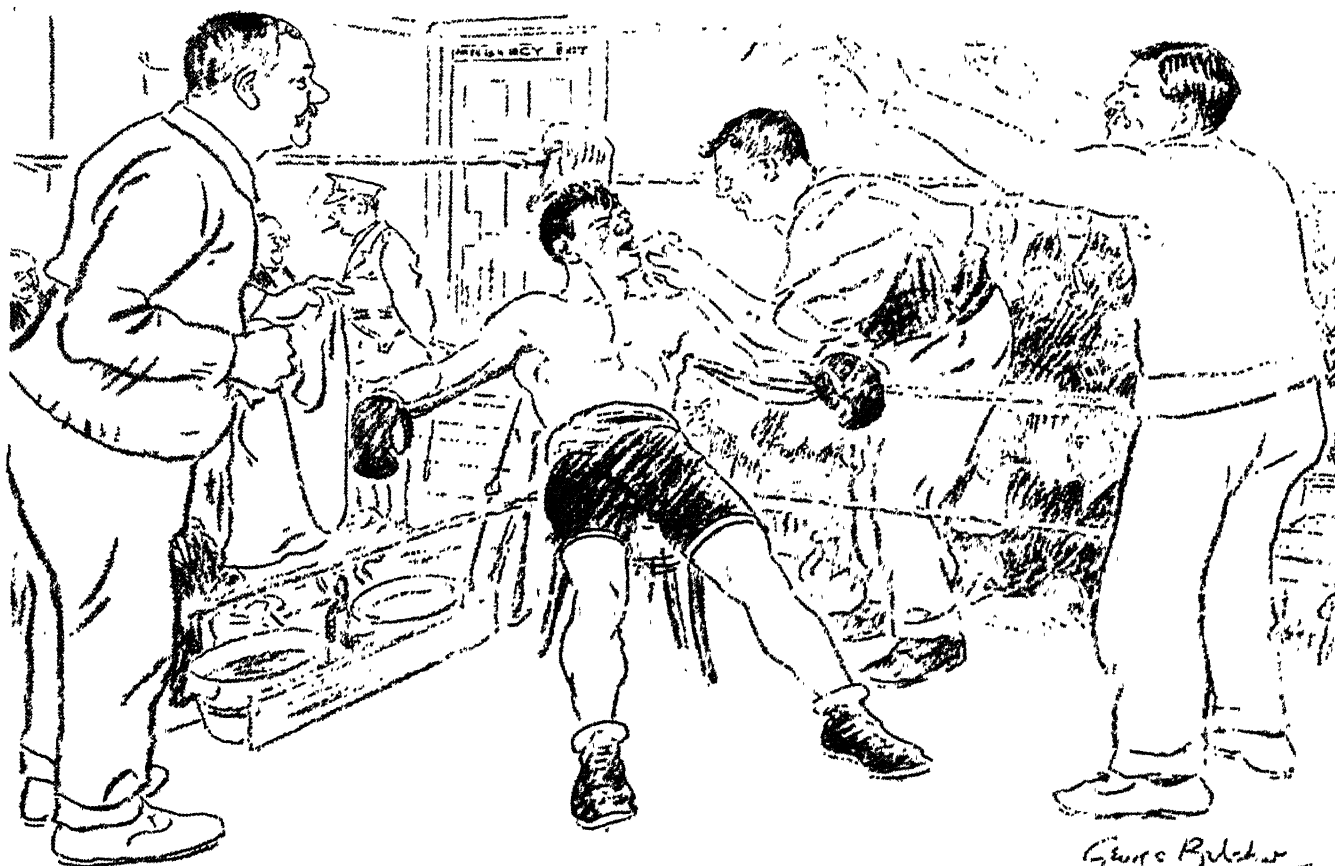


Actor : " I MUST INSIST ON BEING PAID FOR REHEARSALS. "
 Manager : " WHAT ON EARTH FOR ? I NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING. "
 Actor : " BECAUSE LATELY, I'VE HAD SO MANY SIX WEEKS' REHEARSALS FOR A TEN DAYS' RUN. BUT I DON'T MIND GIVING THE PERFORMANCES FREE. "



THE CERTIFICATE

"YES, SIR, THEY RECKON I BE A MIDLIN GUDE COOK, SIR. WULL, A GENTLEMAN FROM LUNNON WHO BIDE YERE FOR A LITTLE TIME SAID MY PASTIES WASN'T TO BE SNEEZED AT."



George Belcher

Optimistic Second : " KEEP IT UP, BILL ; YOU'RE WINNING ! "
Boxer : " WELL, IF I'M WINNING, JIM, THE OTHER POOR BLOKE MUST BE COPING SOMETHING. "



George Belcher

Scene-Shifters' wife (during the shrieks of the heroine) : " THEY SAY 'E'S QUITE A KIND 'USBAND IN PRIVATE. "
 (32)

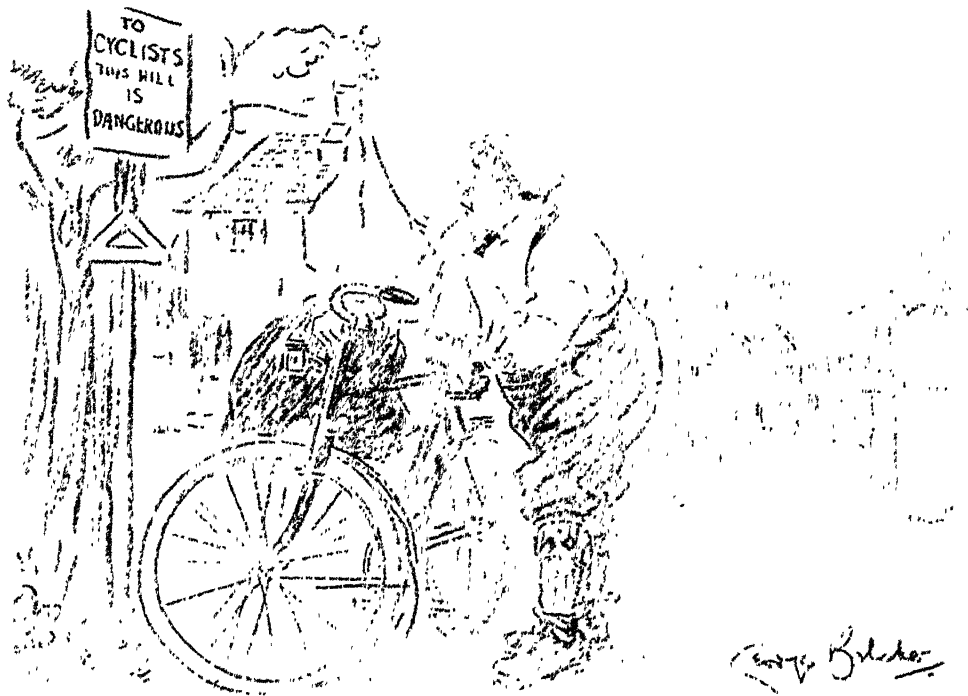


AMBIGUITY

Miss Jones : " HOW MANY LESSONS WOULD HE REQUIRE ? "

Music Teacher : " WELL, THAT, OF COURSE, ALL DEPENDS. "

Miss Jones : " WE ONLY WANTS HIM TO KNOW ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO TEACH. "



Gentleman (who has just climbed the hill) : " NEVER WAS A TRUER WORD SPOKEN THAN THAT."



Gouty Music-Hall Agent : " WHAT'S YER BUSINESS ? "
Struggling Actor : " COMEDIAN."
Agent : " WELL, GO ON ; MAKE ME LAUGH."



THE WILD IRISHMAN.
at the
NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB.
taken from life.

Pat O'Keefe.

George Glavin.

AN ETCHING FOR THE NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB SET



Drawn & Etched by George Belcher May 1918

Mrs HARRIS
OF
FOLLOP YARD
taken from Life.

George Belcher

AN ETCHING



HOPE ETERNAL

Doctor : " YOU KNOW, WILKS, I CAN'T MAKE YOU YOUNG AGAIN."

Wilks : " NO, SIR ; BUT CAN'T YOU KEEP ME GROWING OLDER A LITTLE LONGER ? "



TWO LADIES of WALHAM AVENUE.
taken from **LIFE.**

George Belcher

AN ETCHING



REWARDED

Jones : " I'M AFRAID I HAVEN'T GOT A PENNY. "

Crossing-sweeper : " I DIDN'T NAME THE COIN, SIR. "—[*Gets sixpence*].



SOME PEDIGREE !

Charlady : " YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET RID OF THE PICTURES, ARE YOU, SIR ? "

Jones (giving up his flat) : " YES, I SHALL SELL THESE WITH THE REST. "

Charlady : " OH, SIR, IT DO SEEM A SHAME TO PART WITH YER ANCESTORS. "



"I DON'T 'OLD WITH THIS 'ERE VACCINATION, MRS. GREEN. WHAT'S VACCINATION DONE FOR MY LITTLE TOMMY? SINCE I 'AD 'IM DONE 'E'S 'AD WHOOPING-COUGH, CHICKEN-POX, MEASLES—IN FACT, EVERYTHINK BUT SMALL-POX!"



Mrs. Brown (to Mrs. Jones, who has also been to see a son off in a troopship) :
"WELL, I'M SURE THEY'LL BE STARTING SOON, BECAUSE BOTH FUNNELS ARE
SMOKING; AND, YOU SEE, MY DEAR, THEY COULDN'T WANT BOTH FUNNELS JUST
FOR LUNCH."



THE EPICURE!

First Lady : " NICE BIT ER TRIPE, AIN'T IT ? "

Second Lady : " WELL, MINE'S A BIT STRINGY. "

First Lady : " TRY IT WITH YER VEIL OFF, DEARY. "



Polite Little Boy (suffering from repletion) : " OH, PLEASE, MISS, DON'T ASK ME TO HAVE ANY MORE ; I CAN'T SAY NO."



OVERHEARD

He : " YOU 'AVE MY SEAT, MUM."

She : " OH, NO, THANK YOU, I WON'T DEPRIVE YOU OF IT."

He : " IT'S NO DEPRIVITY, MUM."



Hairdresser (with a view to business—to customer, who is getting rapidly bald) :
"THERE ARE PLENTY OF HAIRDRESSERS, YOU KNOW, SIR, WHO
PROFESS TO MAKE A WIG ; BUT, WHEN YOU'VE GOT IT ON, IT LOOKS
NOTHING LIKE A WIG AT ALL, SIR."



"COLD" COMFORT

"YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF THAT COLD, MRS. GREEN. YER WANT TO GIT A PENNORTH OF UKERLIPTUS FROM THE CHEMIST, PUT IT IN A JUG OF BOILING WATER, 'OLD YER 'EAD OVER IT, AND IGNORE IT."



Servant (rebuked for bringing in a dirty cup) : " FUNNY THING, MUM, I ALWAYS SEEM TO HIT UPON THIS ONE WHEN YOU HAVE COMPANY."



OVER-FED!

Mrs. Green : "THE ONLY THING SHE FANCIED WAS A EGG. I 'APPENED TO 'AVE ONE ABOUT ME, SO I GIVE IT 'ER, AND AFTER SHE'D 'AD IT SHE LOOKED—ER——"

Mrs. Smith : "BETTER?"

Mrs. Green : "WELL, SHE SEEMED FATTER IN THE FACE."



George Blinckley

Earnest Lady : " OF COURSE I UNDERSTAND MEN MUST DRINK WHILE DOING SUCH HOT AND HEAVY WORK. BUT MUST IT BE BEER ? CAN'T THEY DRINK WATER ? "

Mechanic : " YES, LADY, THEY CAN DRINK WATER, BUT (*confidentially*) IT MAKES 'EM SO GIDDY."



Absent-minded Pedagogue : " PADDINGTON, THIRD PERSON, SINGULAR, PLEASE."



George Belcher

THE LOCAL TOUCH

East Anglian : "TELL YOW WHAT THAT IS, SIR : THAT THERE KAISER 'E 'ONT NEVER BE SATISFIED UNTIL 'E'S RUINED MUD-BOROUGH."



First Neighbour : " AN' WOT DID YOU S'Y ? "

Second ditto : " I KEP' ME DIGNITY, MRS. 'ARRIS. ' PIG ! ' I SEZ, AN' SWEP' OUT. "



OVERHEARD

"YUS, IT 'AS TURNED COLD. WHEN I COME OUT THIS MORNING I SEZ TO MESELF, 'SHALL I PUT ME FURS ON OR NOT.' I'M GLAD I DID NOW."



THE MUSKETRY INSTRUCTRESS

Mrs. Green (a well-informed lady, speaking of her son, a new recruit) : " I SAYS TO FRED, ' YOU BE CAREFUL, ' I SAYS ; ' IF YER GUN 'URTS YER SHOULDER LIKE THAT, ME BOY, W'EN YER SHOOTING A 'UNDRED YARDS, W'AT'S IT GOIN' TO DO W'EN YER SHOOTIN' A THOUSAND ? ' "



A POSER

"MUMMY, DID GOD MAKE GERMANS?"

"YES, DARLING."

" WHY ? "



AT THE COSTUMIERS

"OH, YES, SHE'S SMART, BUT SHE HASN'T AN IDEA IN HER VOCABULARY."



"YEW MARK MY WORDS, MRS. PIPSQUEAK—'E'LL BE CAUGHTED, THAT THERE PROFITEERIN' BUTCHER O' MINE, SURE 'NOUGH. 'E CHARGES ME THE SAME FOR MEAT AS IF I 'ADN'T GIVEN 'IM NO COUPON FOR IT."



"IF YOU PUT YER EAR TO THE GROUND YOU CAN HEAR THEM FIRING AWAY UP TO SQUIRE JENKINS."
"WOT, WITH THE NAKED EAR?"



FROM MUDSHIRE

First Native : " I 'EAR THE KAISER HAS AGED TEN YEARS SINCE THE WAR STARTED."
Second Native : " AN' I THART IT'S ONLY BIN ON VOOR MONTHS, JARGE."



QUI S'EXCUSE S'ACCUSE

" I THOUGHT YOU WERE COMING TO SIT FOR ME YESTERDAY ? "

" I WAS, SIR ; BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, SIR, I WENT OUT WITH SOME PALS THE NIGHT BEFORE AND I WAS A BIT SHAKY, SO I THOUGHT AS I'D COME OUT BLURRED, SIR. "



A LITTLE DIFFERENCE

Sporting Friend : " HAD A FINE DAY HUNTIN' YESTERDAY, GEORGE ; FORTY MINUTES WITHOUT A CHECK. "
Well-known Actor : " THAT'S NOTHING, DEAR BOY ; I'VE BEEN FORTY WEEKS WITHOUT ONE. "



First Flapper : " THE CHEEK OF THAT CONDUCTOR ! HE GLARED AT ME AS IF I HADN'T PAID ANY FARE."

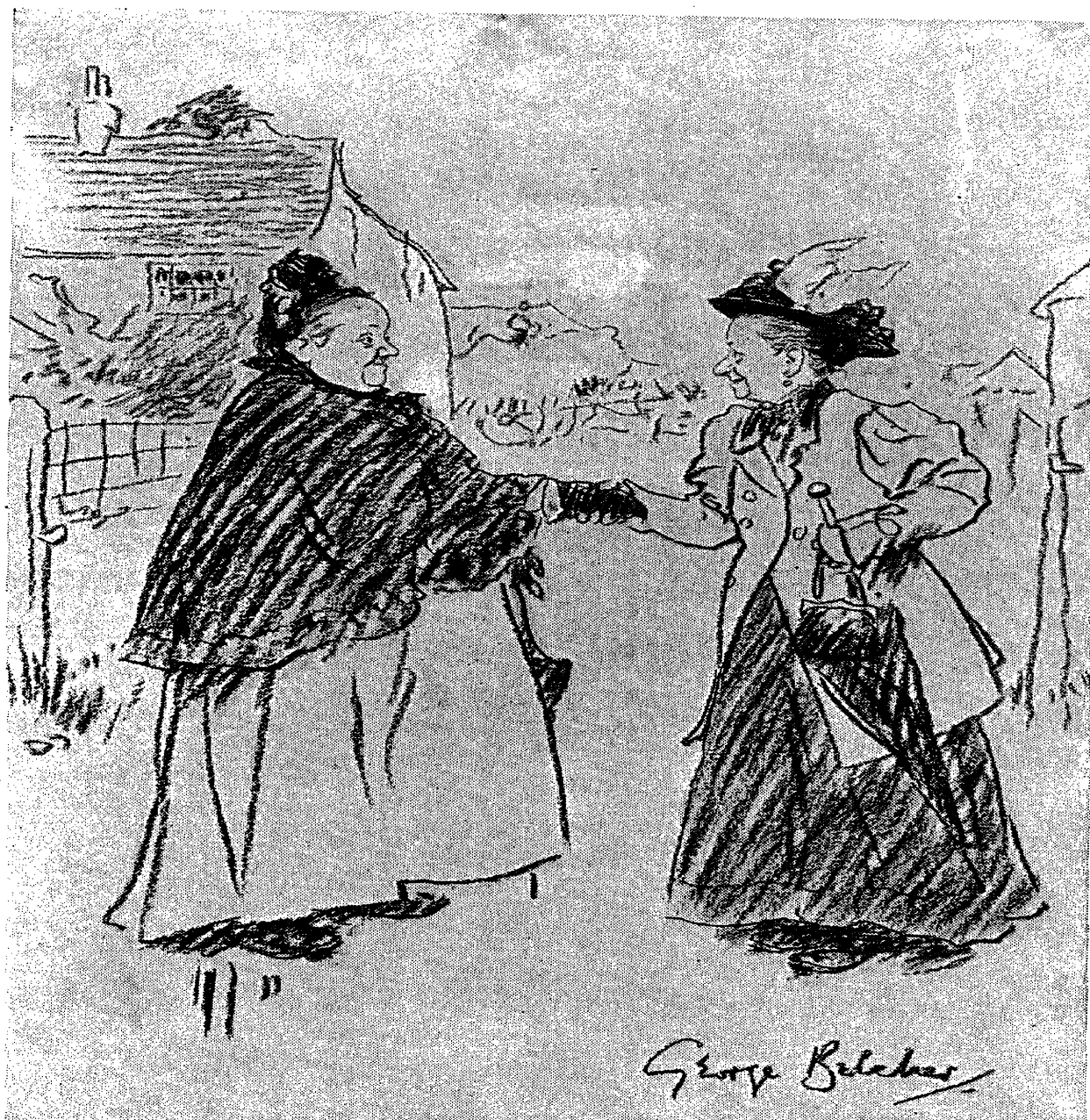
Second Flapper : " AND WHAT DID YOU DO ? "

First Flapper " I JUST GLARED BACK AT HIM—AS IF I HAD ! "



HARD LINES

"I 'EAR YOU VAS IN THE STORES THE OTHER DAY VEN ALL THE LIGHTS VENT OUT. DID YOU GET ANYTHING, MOSES?"
"NO, ABRAHAM, I VAS MOST UNLUCKY. I VAS IN THE PIANO DEPARTMENT."



HOW TO TAKE YOUR PART IN A DIALOGUE

" WHY, MRS. CODLINGS, 'OW ARE YOU, 'OW ARE YOU ? I 'AVEN'T SEEN YOU TO SPEAK TO FOR AGES."

" NO, MRS. WHIDDEN ; NO MORE 'AVEN'T I YOU, NEITHER."



George Bolchini

Employer : " WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ? "

Old Operative : " 'AVING ME 'AIR CUT. "

Employer : " WHAT IN MY TIME ? "

Old Operative : " WELL, IT GREW IN YOUR TIME. "



A DOG'S LIFE

"HAVE YOU GIVEN FIDO HIS SOUP?"

"YES, MUM."

"AND HIS CHICKEN AND JELLY?"

"YES, MUM."

"THEN YOU CAN HAVE SOME BREAD AND CHEESE AND GO TO BED."



THE REAL ATTRACTION

(At South Kensington Museum)

"WELL, MY DEARS, HAVE YOU COME TO SEE THE WORKS OF ART?"

"NO; WE'VE COME TO SEE THE SKELINGTONS."



DRESSED!

Well-informed New Domestic: "SHALL I SERVE THE RABBIT UP IN THE CAMISOLE, MUM?"



HER AILMENT

"YER KNOW, I'M ARMENIC, MRS. HARRIS."

"LOR, MRS. GREEN, I THOUGHT YOU WAS BRITISH!"

"AH! YER DON'T UNDERSTAND, DEARIE: IT MEANS I AIN'T GOT NO BLOOD IN ME"

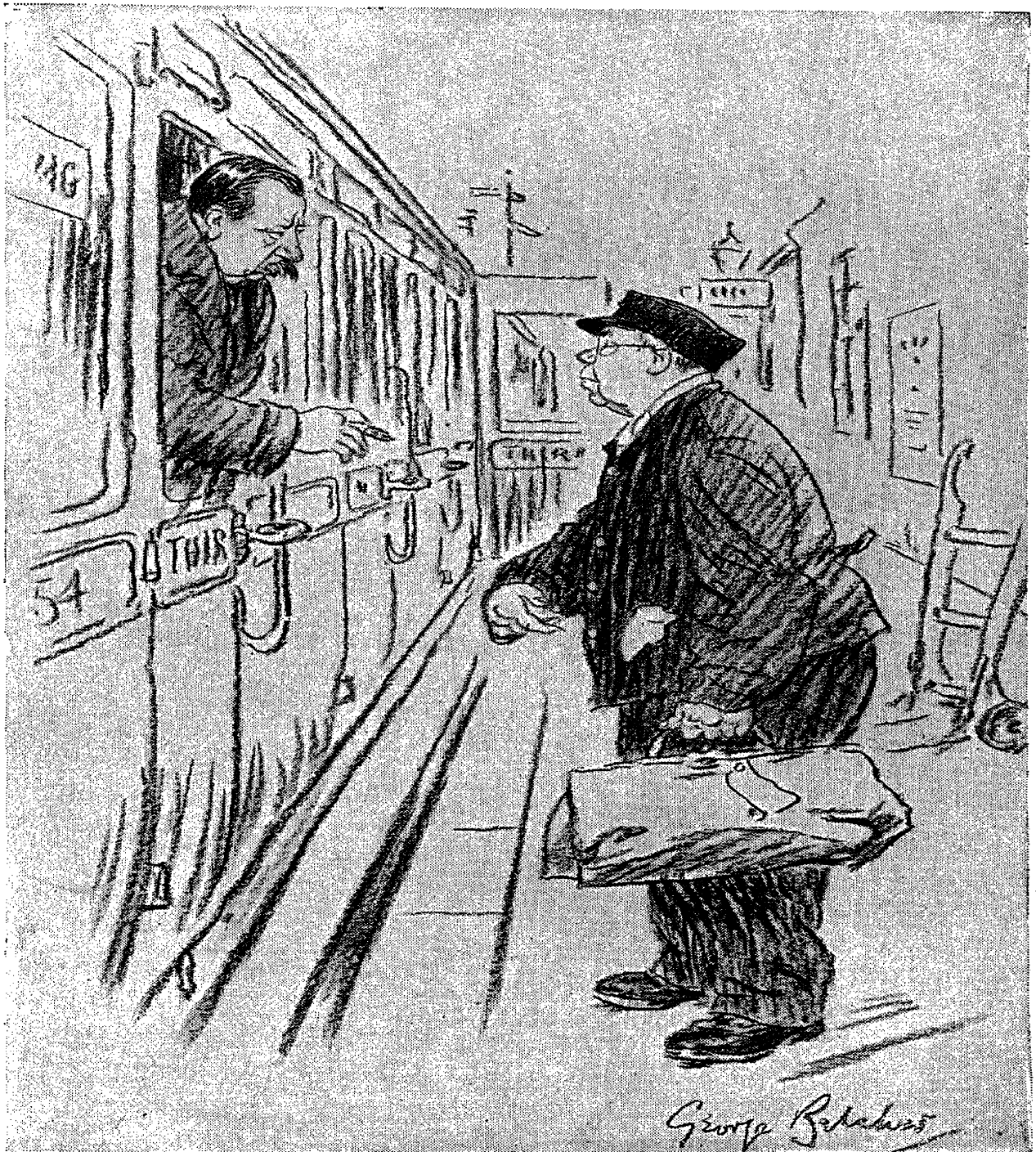


*Darkie (to lady after a wordy war) : " IS YO' DONE FINISHED ? FOR IF YO' IS, LET
ME TELL YO', ALL THAT YO' SAYS I AM, YO' IS."*



" DO 39 'BUSES PASS 'ERE, SIR ? "

" LOR' BLESS YOU. YES, MISSUS—'UNDREDS ! "



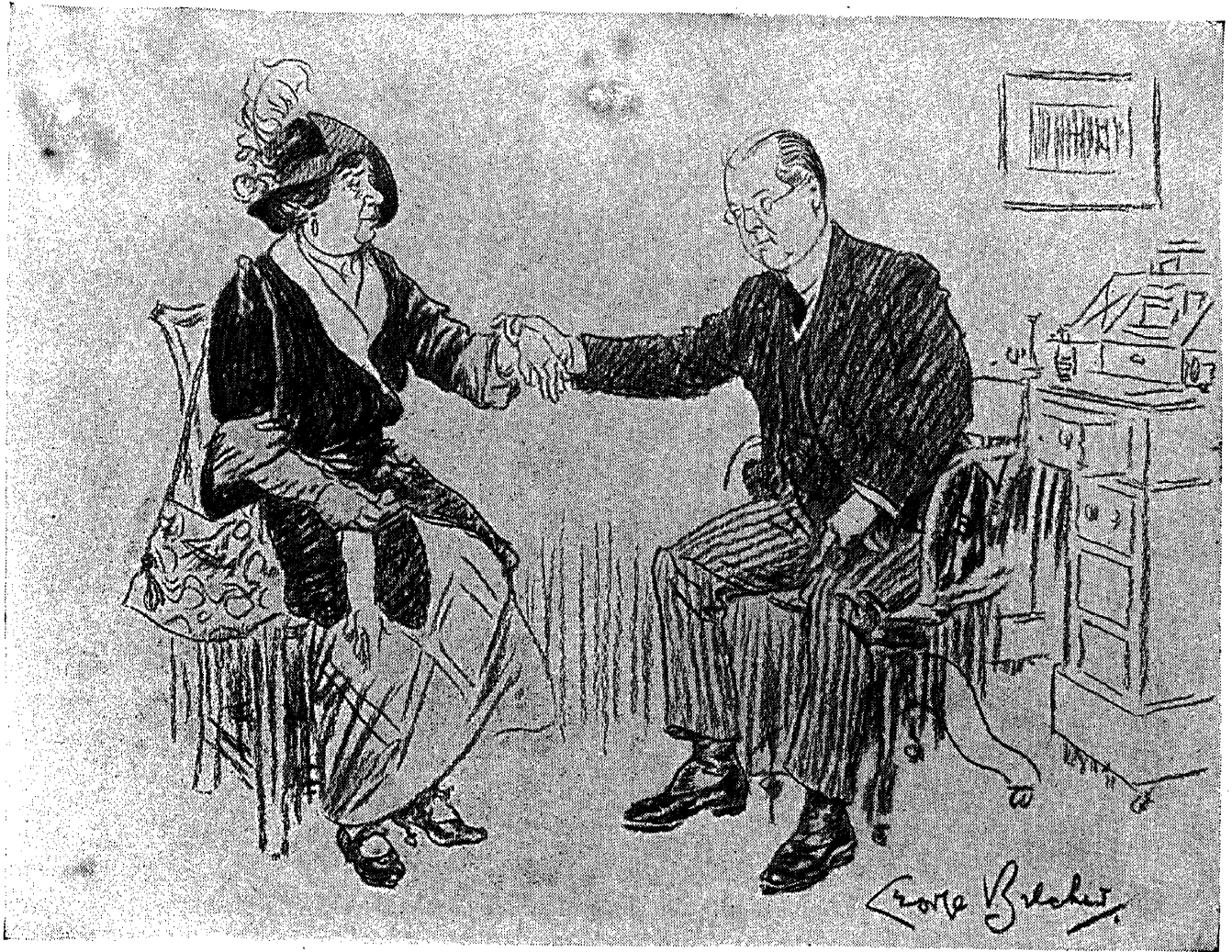
" PORTER, WHAT ON EARTH ARE WE WAITING HERE FOR ? "

" YOU'RE WAITIN' TO GO ON, SIR."



KNOWLEDGE

He : " MY ONLY BROTHER WAS KILLED THIRTY YEARS AGO OUT IN INDIA ; HE WAS KILLED BY A BISON. DO YOU KNOW WHAT A BISON IS ? "
She : " 'ERE, DON'T BE SILLY. I WISH I'D AS MANY SHILLINGS AS I'VE MADE PUDDINGS IN 'EM. "



Patient : " I'VE BEEN AWFULLY TROUBLED LATELY, DOCTOR, WITH MY BREATHING."
Doctor : " HUM ! I'LL SOON GET YOU SOMETHING TO STOP THAT."

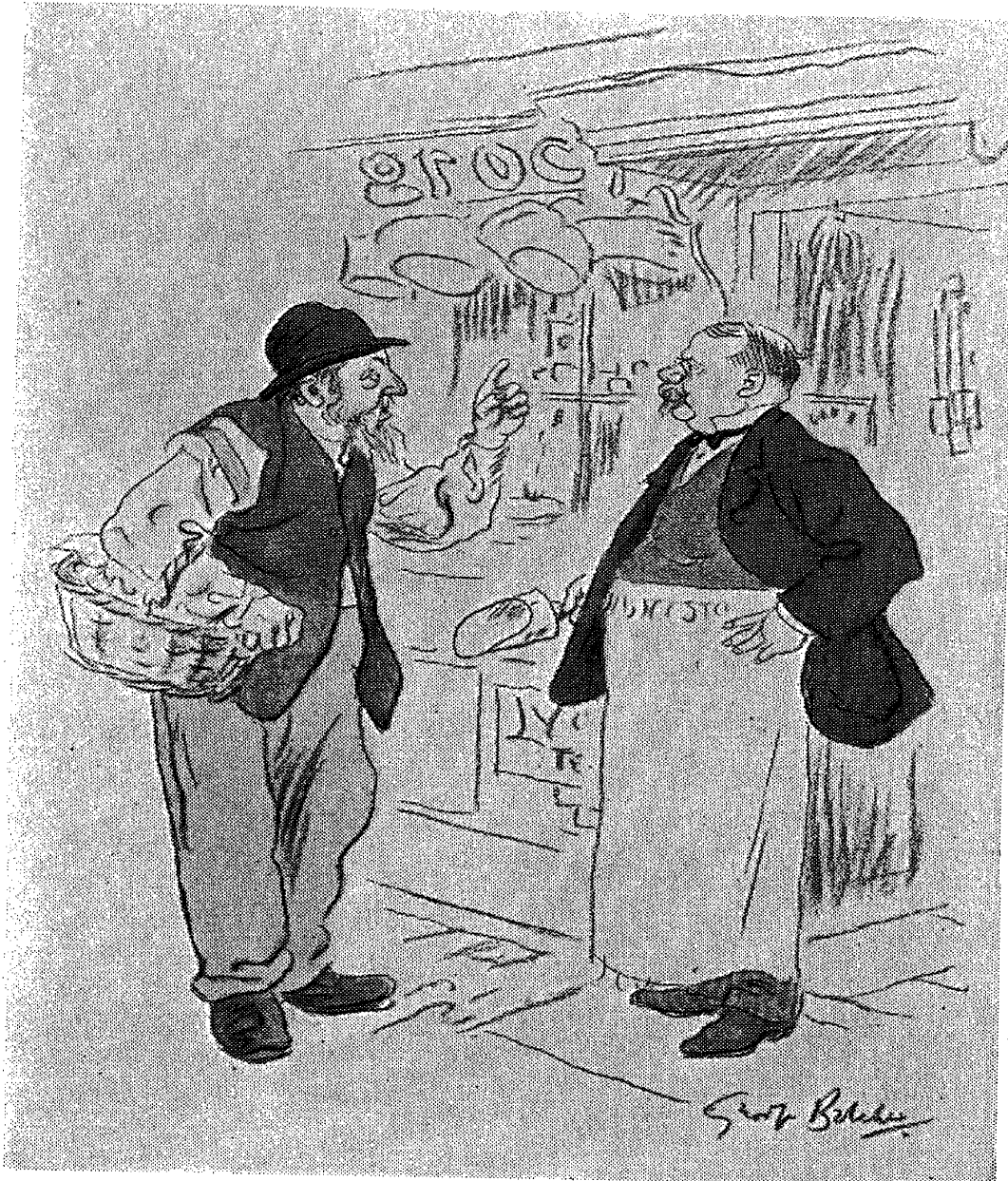


CONTRARIWISE !

Conductor : " WE DON'T GO AS FAR AS PECKHAM."

Old Lady : " YOU GOT PECKHAM ON THE 'BUS !"

Conductor " WE GOT JESTLE'S MILK ON THE 'BUS. BUT WE DON'T GO TO SWITZERLAND."



Grocer : " NOW, MY MAN, THE BUTTER YOU BROUGHT US LAST WEEK—EVERY PACKET OF IT WEIGHED ONLY FIFTEEN OUNCES."

Farmer's Man : " WULL, TO BE SURE, SIR, WE'D LOST OUR ONE-POUND WEIGHT; BUT WE TOOK ONE OF YOUR POUND PACKETS OF TEA TO WEIGH IT WITH."



A FINE COUGH

Young Visitor from London (to old lady) : "THAT'S THE SORT OF COUGH YOU'VE GOT, IF YOU WERE ON THE UNDERGROUND THEY MIGHT MAKE YOU PAY FORTY SHILLINGS."



AFTER SATURDAY NIGHT!

The Parson : " WELL, JOHN, I WAS GLAD TO SEE YOU AT CHURCH ON SUNDAY."

The Village Toper : " LAWKS, PARSON, WAS THAT WHERE I WERE ? "



PLAYING FOR SAFETY

"YOU'RE LOOKING VERY POORLY, MRS. SMAIE."

"YES, MUM, I'VE BEEN TO SEE THE DOCTOR, BUT 'E'S AWAY ON 'IS HOLIDAYS, SO I MUST WAIT TILL HE COMES BACK. I WOULDN'T THINK OF HAVING THE LOCAL DEMONS."



THE REASON WHY!

He: "'I NEVER 'EARD SUCH A NAME TO CALL THE CHILD AS OCTAPUS,' I SEZ. 'BECOS 'E'S THE EIGHTH,' 'E SEZ—THAT'S WOT COMES OF THIS 'ERE LEARNIN'!"



THE PESSIMIST!

"I'VE 'AD 'ER VACCINATED AND I'VE 'AD 'ER CONFIRMED, BUT NOTHINK DON'T SEEM TO CHEER 'ER UP!"



Gentleman (in favour of National work for everyone) : "AND WHY SHOULDN'T PEOPLE BE DOING TO-DAY WHAT THEY NEVER DREAMED OF DOING BEFORE THE WAR ? "

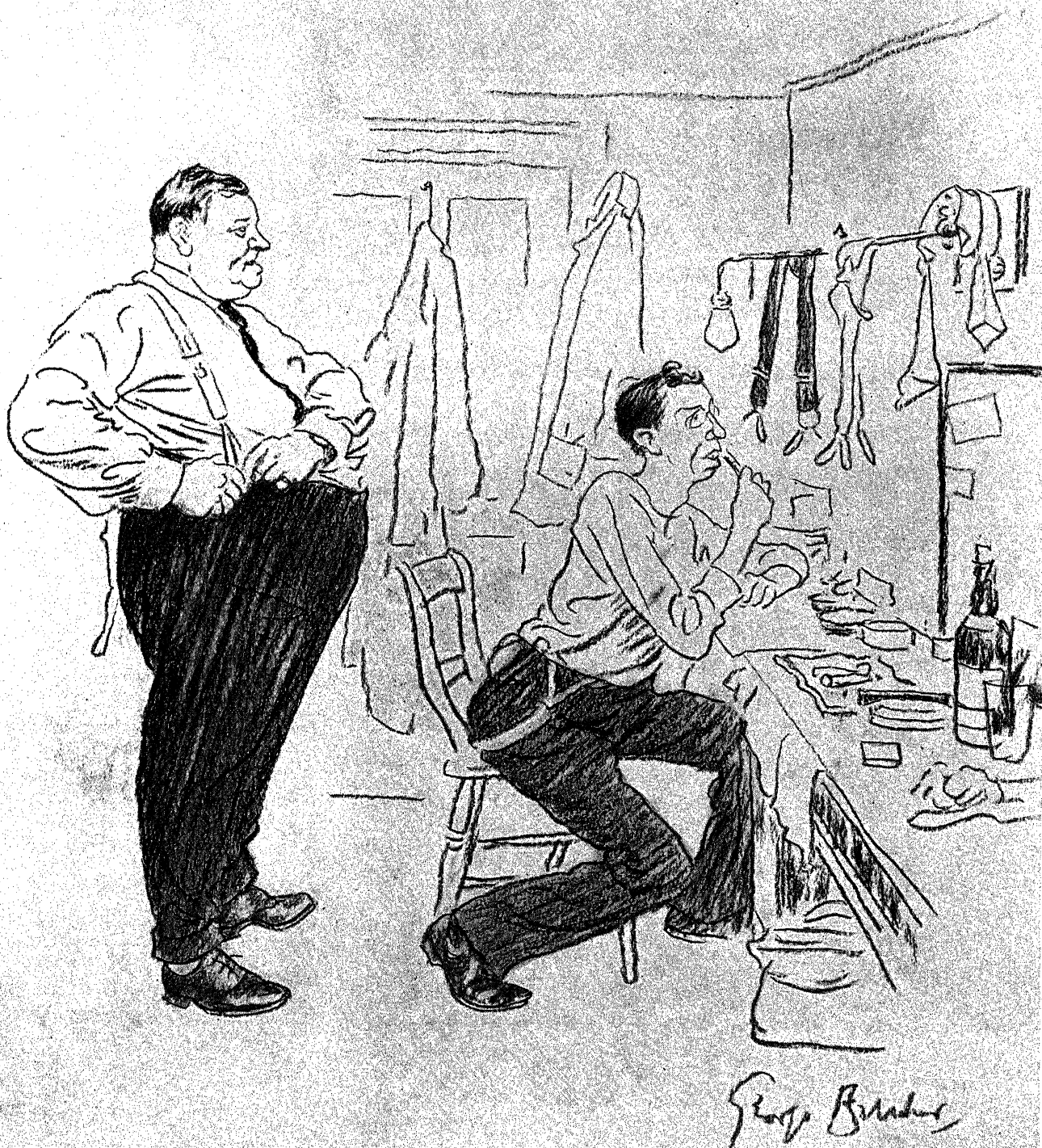
New Assistant (his first operation) : " EXACTLY, SIR. ALL THE SAME, IF ANYBODY HAD TOLD ME TWO DAYS AGO THAT I SHOULD NOW BE CUTTING THE HAIR OF A COMPLETE STRANGER, I'D NEVER HAVE BELIEVED 'IM."



Sam Bunker

PUSSYFOOT!

"YUS, SHE IS LIKE THAT—VERY MOODY, YER KNOW. NOW THIS MORNIN' SHE 'URRIED AFTER ME AND COME UP QUITE PLEASANT, BUT WHEN SHE SEED IT WAS MILK IN ME JUG, SHE TURNED NASTY."



THE CAMOUFLAGE

Gentleman (making up) : " THIS IS THE BEST GREASE PAINT I'VE STRUCK LATELY."

Second Gentleman : " THAT'S WORTH KNOWING ; WHOSE IS IT ? "

First Gentleman : " I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME ; IT'S A CHAP THAT'S ON IN THE FIRST ACT."



THICK OR THIN

Hairdresser : " YOUR HAIR'S VERY THIN ON THE TOP, SIR."

Customer : " AH, I'M GLAD OF THAT ; I HATE FAT HAIR."

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